

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-10 (cancelled)

Claim 11 (Currently amended) Ball-and-socket joint having a joint pin provided with a joint ball (1.1), a plastic joint housing (2) into which is inserted a bearing shell (3) for rotatable and tiltable support of the joint ball (1.1), the bearing shell (3) being a one-piece member having an open end portion through which the joint pin extends and a support portion that contacts and supports the joint ball (1.1), and a metal ring (4) to positively lock the bearing shell (3) within the joint housing (2), the metal ring (4) having a radially outwardly angled flange (4.2) that is embedded in the joint housing (2), the metal ring (4) having a radially inwardly bent end segment (4.3) located in an area of an opening in the joint housing (2) that is provided for passage of the joint pin (1), ~~whereby~~ the radially inwardly bent end segment (4.3) abutting the open end portion of the bearing shell (3) and securing the bearing shell (3) within the joint housing (2); an inside diameter of a cylindrical center part (4.1) of the metal ring (4) corresponds to an outside diameter of the bearing shell (3).

Claim 12 (cancelled)

Claim 13 (Previously presented) Ball-and-socket joint as claimed in claim 24, characterized in that the flange (4.2) protrudes at an approximately 90° angle from the cylindrical center part (4.1) of the metal ring (4).

Claim 14 (Currently amended) Ball-and-socket joint as claimed in claim 11 characterized in that the cylindrical center part (4.1) of the metal ring (4) is interposed between and connects the radially inwardly bent end segment (4.3) and the radially outwardly angled flange (4.2), the radially outwardly angled flange (4.2) being located ~~ends~~ in an area of an equator (Ä) of the joint ball (1.1).

Claim 15 (cancelled)

Claim 16 (Previously presented) Ball-and-socket joint as claimed in claim 25 characterized in that the bearing shell (3) also includes a head-side area, facing away from the joint pin (1), that is provided with indentations (3.2) which extend parallel to a joint axis (L).

Claim 17 (Previously presented) Ball-and-socket joint as claimed in claim 16 characterized in that the slits (3.1) and indentations (3.2) are formed in the bearing shell (3) so as to be mutually offset in circumferential direction.

Claim 18 (Previously presented) Ball-and-socket joint as claimed in claim 11 characterized in that the joint housing (2) in the area of the opening is provided with a ring groove (2.1) that is adapted to receive a ball-side end of a sealing bellows (5).

Claim 19 (cancelled)

Claim 20 (Currently amended) Ball-and-socket joint comprising:

a joint pin having a joint ball;

a bearing shell for supporting the joint ball of the joint pin, the joint ball being rotatable and, to a limited extent, tiltable relative to the bearing shell;

a joint housing for supporting the bearing shell, the joint housing having a closed end and an open end, the open end having an opening for receiving the bearing shell; and

a metal ring having a cylindrical portion, the cylindrical portion of the metal ring protruding from the opening of the joint housing and forming a passage through which receiving the bearing shell is received, an inside diameter of the metal ring comprising a guide surface for engaging and receiving an outside diameter of the bearing shell and for guiding the bearing shell into the joint housing through the passage, the metal ring also having ~~a radially inwardly bent~~ an end segment for that is bent radially inwardly after the bearing shell is received in the joint

housing, the end segment that is bent radially inwardly  
securing the bearing shell within the joint housing.

Claim 21 (Previously presented) Ball-and-socket joint as claimed in claim 20 wherein the metal ring further includes a radially outwardly extending flange portion, the radially outwardly extending flange portion extending into and being embedded in the joint housing for anchoring the metal ring within the joint housing.

Claim 22 (Currently amended) Ball-and-socket joint  
comprising:

a joint pin having a joint ball;

a bearing shell for supporting the joint ball of the  
joint pin, the joint ball being rotatable and, to a limited  
extent, tiltable relative to the bearing shell;

a joint housing for supporting the bearing shell,  
the joint housing having an opening for receiving the bearing  
shell; and

a metal ring having a cylindrical portion, the  
cylindrical portion of the metal ring protruding from the  
opening of the joint housing and forming a passage receiving  
the bearing shell, an inside diameter of the metal ring  
comprising a guide surface for engaging and receiving an  
outside diameter of the bearing shell and for guiding the  
bearing shell into the joint housing, the metal ring also  
having a radially inwardly bent end segment for securing the  
bearing shell within the joint housing,

the metal ring further including a radially outwardly extending flange portion, the radially outwardly extending flange portion extending into and being embedded in the joint housing for anchoring the metal ring within the joint housing,

~~Ball-and-socket joint as claimed in claim 21 wherein~~  
the joint ball ~~has~~ having an equator, the radially outwardly extending flange portion of the metal ring extending into the joint housing at a location near the equator of the joint ball.

Claim 23 (Currently amended) Ball-and-socket joint comprising:

a joint pin having a joint ball;

a bearing shell for supporting the joint ball of the joint pin, the joint ball being rotatable and, to a limited extent, tiltable relative to the bearing shell;

a joint housing for supporting the bearing shell, the joint housing having an opening for receiving the bearing shell;

a metal ring having a cylindrical portion, the cylindrical portion of the metal ring protruding from the opening of the joint housing and forming a passage receiving the bearing shell, an inside diameter of the metal ring comprising a guide surface for engaging and receiving an outside diameter of the bearing shell and for guiding the bearing shell into the joint housing, the metal ring also having a radially inwardly bent end segment for securing the bearing shell within the joint housing; and

~~Ball and socket joint as claimed in claim 20 further~~  
including a sealing bellows, the joint housing includes a ring  
groove for receiving a portion of the sealing bellows, the  
ring groove being located radially outwardly of the  
cylindrical portion of the metal ring.

Claim 24 (Previously presented) Ball-and-socket joint  
having a joint pin provided with a joint ball (1.1), a plastic  
joint housing (2) into which is inserted a bearing shell (3)  
for rotatable and tiltable support of the joint ball (1.1),  
and a metal ring (4) to positively lock the bearing shell (3)  
within the joint housing (2), the metal ring (4) is embedded  
in the joint housing (2) and has a radially inwardly bent end  
segment (4.3) located in an area of an opening in the joint  
housing (2) that is provided for passage of the joint pin (1),  
characterized in that an inside diameter of a cylindrical  
center part (4.1) of the metal ring (4) corresponds to an  
outside diameter of the bearing shell (3), the metal ring (4)  
having a radially outwardly angled flange (4.2) that is  
extrusion-coated with material of the joint housing (2).

Claim 25 (Previously presented) Ball-and-socket joint  
having a joint pin provided with a joint ball (1.1), a plastic  
joint housing (2) into which is inserted a bearing shell (3)  
for rotatable and tiltable support of the joint ball (1.1),  
and a metal ring (4) to positively lock the bearing shell (3)  
within the joint housing (2), the metal ring (4) is embedded  
in the joint housing (2) and has a radially inwardly bent end

segment (4.3) located in an area of an opening in the joint housing (2) that is provided for passage of the joint pin (1), characterized in that an inside diameter of a cylindrical center part (4.1) of the metal ring (4) corresponds to an outside diameter of the bearing shell (3), the bearing shell (3) includes a pin-side area that is provided with slits (3.1) which extend up to an area of an equator (Ä) of the joint ball (1.1).

Claim 26 (Currently amended) Ball-and-socket joint as claimed in claim 11, characterized in that the metal ring (4) protrudes outwardly of the plastic joint housing (2) such that the radially inwardly bent end segment (4.3) is spaced away from the joint housing (2) in the area of the opening of the joint housing (2), the open end portion of the bearing shell (3) also protruding outwardly of the plastic joint housing (2) and being secured relative to the joint housing (2) by the radially inwardly bent end segment (4.3)~~securing the bearing shell (3) in the joint housing (2).~~

Claim 27 (New) Ball-and socket joint comprising:

a joint pin (1) provided with a joint ball (1.1);

a plastic joint housing (2) into which is inserted a bearing shell (3) for rotatable and tiltable support of the joint ball (1.1);

a metal ring (4) to positively lock the bearing shell (3) within the joint housing (2);

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the metal ring (4) having a radially outwardly angled flange (4.2) being embedded in the joint housing (2);

the metal ring (4) having a radially inwardly bent segment (4.3) located in an area of the opening in the joint housing (2) that is provided for the passage of the joint pin (1) and the radially inwardly bent segment (4.3) secures a position of the bearing shell (3) within the joint housing (2); and

an inside diameter of a cylindrical center part (4.1) of the metal ring (4) corresponds to an outside diameter of the bearing shell (3).